

TOOLBOX TALK #34

SIDING INSTALLER FALLS FROM PUMP JACK SCAFFOLD

A 38-year-old siding installer who owned his own construction company was working for a subcontractor at a new construction apartment complex. On the day of the incident, the



installer accessed the scaffold platform at the building's third floor level by climbing an extension ladder. The scaffold was not equipped with a guardrail system; it had only a work bench, which alone, does not meet the requirement of a guardrail system.

The installer provided his own full-body harness, but was not wearing it when the incident occurred. The subcontractor provided pump jack scaffolds and the rest of the personal fall arrest system, which consisted of a vertical rope lifeline with a rope grab and connector. The subcontractor required that site workers use the personal fall arrest system.

As the installer was working from the scaffold platform, he fell 23 feet, landing on a pile of construction materials on the ground. He died of multiple blunt force injuries.

Investigators found that all employees had received fall protection training. The site superintendent reported that he held weekly site-wide safety meetings, which included an emphasis on the requirement for workers to use personal fall arrest systems. In addition, he performed safety walkarounds once or twice a day to ensure that workers were using fall protection. On the day of the incident, he had not yet conducted a walkaround inspection.

To prevent similar incidents, contractors and subcontractors should:

- Use guardrails on scaffolds whenever practical, instead of or in addition to personal fall protection.
- Emphasize the requirement that workers maintain 100% tie-off. This should be written into the work contract.
- Inspect scaffold operations at the start of each day before work begins and periodically throughout the day to ensure workers use fall protection.